

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 remain pending in the application with the present amendments. Claims 1-11 stand withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected invention. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 12-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,262,450 B1 to Kotecki et al. ("*Kotecki*"). For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently amended claims are fully distinguished over *Kotecki*. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is requested.

As recited in claim 12 herein, an integrated circuit includes a substrate which has a single-crystal semiconductor region defining a major surface of the substrate. The integrated circuit includes a plurality of first transistors having conduction channels disposed in a memory cell array region of the semiconductor region. A plurality of second transistors have conduction channels disposed in an external region of the semiconductor region which lies outside of the memory cell array region. A dielectric region is disposed over the memory cell array region and the external region.

A key feature of the invention is that the bitlines and bitline contacts are both disposed in the same troughs in a dielectric region above the semiconductor region. Each trough has one pair of vertical sidewalls, and each sidewall extends substantially in a single plane between the conductive lines and the substrate. Such recitations were originally claimed in claim 13, but that claim is now incorporated into claim 12, in addition to other clarifying amendments made

herein. A plurality of bitline contacts are disposed in the troughs, the bitline contacts including a plurality of conductive vias which extend in a vertical direction substantially normal to the major surface to contact the first transistors. Metallic conductive lines interconnect the bitlines to the second transistors, the conductive lines differing from the bitlines in a patterned characteristic including at least one of horizontal width, vertical thickness, and placement relative to the bitlines.

Clearly, *Kotecki* neither teaches nor suggests the features of the invention as now recited in claim 12. *Kotecki* does not teach or suggest an arrangement in which bitlines and bitline contacts are disposed in the *same* troughs, those *same* troughs having vertical, single-plane sidewalls, as recited herein. Rather, *Kotecki* describes the bitline contacts including conductive material 46 deposited into vias 44 (col. 3, Ins. 28-45) (the via also erroneously referenced as "54" at col. 4, In. 14), while the bitlines are disposed in different troughs 48 (col. 4, Ins. 1-14). Nor does *Kotecki* teach or suggest an arrangement in which metallic conductive lines are interconnected to the bitlines, the conductive lines differing from the bitlines in a patterned characteristic including at least one of horizontal width, vertical thickness and placement relative to the bitlines. In the example described in Applicants' specification, these differences in width, vertical thickness and/or placement are such as result from processing which is different from that used to create the bitlines and bitline contacts. While these processing differences are not being used now to distinguish the invention from *Kotecki*, they help to

illustrate the differences in structure that are achieved between the bitlines and the conductive lines that are interconnected thereto.

Moreover, features as additionally recited in claims 13 and 19 are neither taught nor suggested by *Kotecki*.

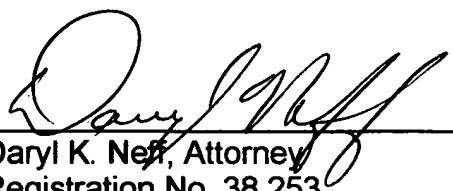
Support for the present amendments is provided, *inter alia*, throughout the detailed description of Applicants' Specification, the drawings, and the claims as originally filed.

Accordingly, in view of the amendments and remarks herein, it is believed that all claims of the application are now in condition for allowance. However, if for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, the Examiner is requested to telephone the Applicants' attorney at the number indicated below to discuss any issues that may remain.

It is believed that no fee is due in connection with the filing of this Amendment. However, if any fee is due, authorization is granted to debit the Deposit Account No. 09-0458 of the Assignee. If there is an overpayment, please credit the same account.

Respectfully submitted,

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